

VZCZCXYZ0003  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #0089 0220722  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 220722Z JAN 09  
FM AIT TAIPEI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0799  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8894  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0345

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 000089

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS  
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: WAR IN IRAQ, OBAMA'S INAUGURATION

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their January 22 news coverage on the son, daughter-in-law and brother-in-law of former President Chen Shui-bian, who all pled guilty Wednesday to involvement in the family's money laundering operations; and on the inauguration of U.S. President Barack Obama. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" discussed the war in Iraq and the legacy of former U.S. President George W. Bush. The article said it is not Bush alone, but the willpower of the U.S. people that caused the war in Iraq. An editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" continued to discuss the inauguration of Obama and said, "his presidency has rekindled the Americans' hope that their nation will fare better in the years ahead." End summary.

## ¶2. War in Iraq

"Should George W. Bush Be Held Fully Responsible for the War in Iraq?"

The "International Lookout" column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 150,000] wrote (1/22):

"One can say that [former President George W.] Bush left Washington D.C. in a low-spirited manner, and he was rated as a very unwelcome president. But can people really put all the blame on Bush alone? The biggest mistake he made was perhaps the launch of the war in Iraq, which had dragged the United States into a quagmire. But was the launch of the war in Iraq a result of Bush's arbitrary and willful act?

"Strictly speaking, the United States is the nation that likes to start most wars since WWII, because it believes it has the strongest military power, and wouldn't it be a waste of U.S. national defense funds if it fails to use such power to achieve diplomatic ends? An overwhelming majority of the American people believe that it is entirely justified [for the United States] to show off its military power by frightening or conquering other countries, subjecting them to the will of the United States, with or without a proper reason. In a word, it is [the American's] feeling of being superior that has caused them to do so. But when things fail to turn out the way they wish, voices of opposition will mount, because the United States cannot afford to lose face, and as a result, the ones who carry out the war will become a target for attack. ....

"How many people died because of the Korean War? What about the Vietnam War and the war in Iraq? The United States has never achieved any of the goals it has set for starting these wars, as [one can see that] Pyongyang is now equipped with nuclear missiles; North Vietnam devoured South Vietnam; and Iraq has split from one unified country into three sides that fight with each other. Were these simply the results of the individual willpower of [former Presidents] Truman, Johnson, and Bush? No, it is the willpower of the people of the United States that has caused all these."

## ¶3. Obama's Inauguration

"Obama -- the Hope of the American People"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post"  
[circulation: 30,000] editorialized (1/22):

"Barack Obama, America's first black president ever, inherited a multitude of tough tasks as he assumed office on Tuesday. And yet he struck a note of hope on these challenges in his inaugural address. His confidence and optimism are important as America grapples with a lingering recession, mounting unemployment and a staggering budget, among other trying problems. ... The first 100 days of the Obama administration will be a crucial period. It could have a huge global impact. Americans and people in many other countries have high expectations of him. ...

"That Obama won the presidential election by a convincing margin signifies that America is entering a new era, one in which racial prejudices are fast fading and people are no longer judged by the color of their skin but by their ability and character. America's invasion of Iraq has made Washington lose a great [sic] of the goodwill abroad. This is part of the mess Obama is inheriting from the Bush administration. An important task for the 44th President of the U.S. is to repair the country's tarnished image. ... Maybe Obama will not accomplish all or even most of the missions he mentioned in his inaugural address. Yet, his presidency has rekindled the Americans' hope that their nation will fare better in the years ahead."

YOUNG